

Message Text

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44

ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 SS-15

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DRAFTED BY EUR;SOV;MLEVITSKY:REH

APPROVED BY EUR:SOV:RBARRY

D/HA - LARTHUR

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R 220044Z APR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SREF, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET SEAMAN JUMPS SHIP AND ASKS FOR ASYLUM

1. SOVIET SEAMAN VIKTOR YAKOVLEVITCH KOVSH, RESIDENT OF LENINGRAD, LEFT SOVIET SHIP BELGOROD DOCKED IN BALTIMORE MORNING OF APRIL 21 AND PRESENTED HIMSELF TO INS TO ASK FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM. KOVSH, WHO HAS WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN IN LENINGRAD, SAID HE JUMPED SHIP BECAUSE HE WANTED A BETTER LIFE.

2. LATER IN THE DAY IN PRESENCE OF INS REP AND EUR/SOV OFFICER, KOVSH SPOKE TO SHIP'S CAPTAIN AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO SOVEMBASSY CONSUL ZHUK. HE REAFFIRMED TO SOVIETS THAT HIS DECISION NOT TO RETURN TO SHIP WAS FIRM AND THAT HE WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS MIND. HIS ONLY REQUEST TO SOVIETS WAS THAT HIS PERSONAL EFFECTS ABOARD SHIP BE TRANSFERRED TO HIS FAMILY. INTERVIEW WAS NOT ACRIMONIOUS ALTHOUGH SOVIETS MENTIONED WIFE AND CHILDREN SEVERAL TIMES AND STRESSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT THEY WOULD GUARANTEE NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN TO KOVSH IF

HE CHOSE TO RETURN.

3. KOVSH WILL REMAIN IN BALTIMORE OVERNIGHT AND THEN TRAVEL
TO NEW YORK WHERE HE WILL BE PUT IN TOUCH WITH TOLSTOY
FOUNDATION. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: POLITICAL ASYLUM, DEFLECTION, MERCHANT SEAMEN
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
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